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T O **CONFIDENTIAL** R E T

1523

EUROPE

1. AUSTRIA: Soviet probing Western plans in Austria--US Minister Donnelly in Vienna reports that the Soviet political adviser there recently called on Foreign Minister Gruber and told him that the Soviet Union had heard rumors of Western Power negotiations with Austria concerning future plans for that country. Gruber told the political adviser that these rumors were untrue and pressed him to be more specific, but the Soviet official refused to expand on his statement. However, he went on to tell Gruber that the USSR was very sincere in its desire to maintain the status quo and the quadripartite agreement in Austria. He also said that the Soviet Union favors an early four-power meeting but the US does not, and repeated several times that his government "wants peace and only peace" and abhors war. Gruber was puzzled as to the Soviet official's motivation in this conversation but pointed out to Donnelly that this official has followed this line in recent discussions.

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NEAR EAST-AFRICA

2. FRENCH MOROCCO: Pressure on Sultan increased--US Consul McBride in Rabat indicates that the French campaign against the Sultan of Morocco is "hitting a new high," with the Sultan's deposition now thought to be a strong possibility. McBride says that Moroccan sources consider the Sultan's present position to be at its worst since the initiation of the French drive to oust him. French sources are pretending that the situation is improved, but in McBride's view local developments "hardly appear to bear out such a contention."

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State Dept. review completed

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T O **CONFIDENTIAL** S E C R E T

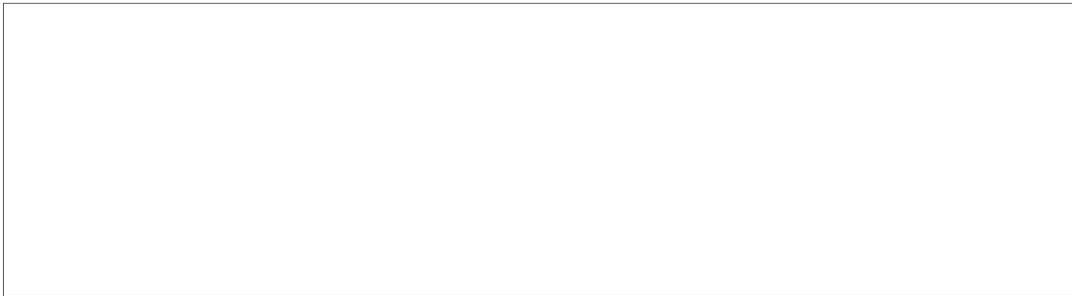
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FAR EAST

3. INDOCHINA: De Lattre may hasten new Cabinet--US Legation Saigon transmits from the British Consul in Hanoi a report that General de Lattre, prior to his departure for Dalat on 15 February, declared he was tired of Bao Dai's indecision and intended to see that Bao Dai "got on with it." According to source, de Lattre said sarcastically that he hoped this action would not be considered by the British and the Americans as French intervention in Viet's affairs.



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